THE MADRAS LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 24th March 1953.

The House met in the Assembly Chamber, Government Estate, Mount Road, at half-past eight of the clock, Mr. Speaker (THE HON. SRI J. SIVASHANMUGAM PILLAI) in the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER :—" I have put down 29 questions in the list before the House to-day. With the co-operation of the House, I want to finish all the questions."

I.—PRIVILEGE—ADMISSION OF QUESTIONS.

* SRI K. KRISHNA RAO :—" Sir, I have raised a question of privilege, and it has been disallowed. I should like to have your ruling about a particularly important question, that is, the question affecting the rights of Members about questions and putting questions. Particularly in this session the right of putting questions has been drastically curtailed. For example, a number of questions of which notices have been given, have been left unstarred, and questions relating to finance have not been answered. But the budget is proceeding apace. I should like to know if the office is in any way jeopardising or trampling on our rights. If privilege motions are simply thrown out and not allowed, I ask in all seriousness, what is the relief we have got to protect our own privileges in the matter of putting questions and eliciting answers. It has also been said that the procedure in the House of Commons is to be followed. I say that in England, we do not have the kind of Opposition we are having in the Madras State. Because there in England the kind of Opposition is a loyal Opposition, and an Opposition which is a *Namkevaste* Opposition. Here we have real Opposition. Here the interests to be opposed are formidable. We represent the people and their interests, and putting interpellations and eliciting answers is a matter not affecting us personally, but affecting the way in which the finances of this State are bungled and the way in which people's interests are trampled upon. That is why I say that it is not merely a question of our privileges but the privileges of the people to have a reasonable response to their questions regarding the way in which their finances are being mismanaged. I should like to have a definite ruling from you in the matter. We feel that in the matter of putting questions our interests are jeopardised, and our rights are trampled upon. When we feel that our rights are trampled upon, what is the remedy; have we no go at all? On these points I should like to have a ruling, because a number of questions have been disallowed. I have also seen that questions have been disallowed now on the same grounds on which they were admitted in the last Assembly. I will give an instance."

MR. SPEAKER :—" I want to make it clear that this is not a privilege motion at all. Regarding the point of order raised by the hon. Member, I may tell the House that the Chair has the

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power to allow a question or disallow it. It is entirely within the power of the Chair to disallow a question if the Chair thinks that the question is not in order. The second point raised is whether the Chair has power to make a starred question an unstarred one. If the Chair thinks that the answer to the question will be very long, the Chair has power to treat it as an unstarred question. Regarding the manner of answers by Hon. Ministers, the Chair has nothing to do. The manner of giving answers is entirely the responsibility of Hon. Ministers."

SRI P. RAMAMURTHI :—" While I do not want to say anything in regard to the discretion that is vested in the Chair to allow or disallow a question on the ground that it is in order or not in order, I would like to submit that it is very necessary for the Members of this House to know the general principles governing the basis on which the Chair comes to the conclusion that a particular question is in order or not in order."

MR. SPEAKER :—" I shall ans[illegible] an[illegible] here and now. These principles are given in the Rules. The[illegible], the [illegible]mber will please go through the Rules. I may also state i[illegible]ame time that whenever a question is disallowed, the reasons [illegible] disallowing it and the Assembly rule under which it is so disallowed are communicated to the Member."

* SRI K. KRISHNA RAO :—" With your permission, Sir, I should like to say one thing. For example, questions based upon newspaper reports have been allowed in the last Assembly. I can say very many questions have been admitted. But now when I put questions based upon newspaper reports, they have been disallowed. I should like to know whether the previous Assembly, which was not having a real Opposition, had a different set of Rules from the Rules of the present Assembly, which has a real Opposition."

MR. SPEAKER :—" We are following the same rules. Instead of discussing this question here the hon. Member may bring it to my notice separately. I may also say that whenever there is a question put on the basis of a report in the newspapers, the hon. Member who puts the question should make himself responsible for the statements. He should not shove the responsibility on to the newspaper. Now let us proceed to Questions and Answers."

II.—QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

STARRED QUESTIONS.

Thermal Station at Kozhikode.

* 131-G. *Q.*—SRI K. P. GOPALAN : Will the Hon. the Minister for Public Works be pleased to state whether there is any proposal under consideration of the Government to install a Thermal Station at Kozhikode in Malabar to avoid the cut in supplying electricity to that place on account of the water scarcity in Mettur and Pykara anicuts?